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## ENTERED FOR THE PLATE.

'We must really have a civility-dinner next week. There are the'—here my wife enumerated some half-dozen or so of acquaintances, who had not ripened into intimates—'to whom we are in debt.'

'Then let us settle the score as soon as possible,' I replied. 'Send out your invitations, and give me the number, that I may know what wine to order from Bookay and Baddy.'

For I blush to confess that I had no cellar. I had twice attempted to 'lay down' wine, but it would keep rising up again with such pertinacity that I gave up the experiment. I believe, however, that though cellarless, I am rather of a hospitable disposition, and like playing host, so that I spoke with a cheerful accent, which rather aggravated my spouse.

'Ah,' she said, and with perfect truth, 'it is easy enough to order the wine; but if you had before you the task of looking after the collection of the silver, with the bother, and anxiety, and responsibility which I feel till it is all returned safely, you would not be so pleased at the prospect. Let me see: there is Cousin Mary's dozen of forks and spoons, Mrs Tomkyns's epergne, Louisa's fish-alice'—and the little woman soon made out a list of the friends who were to supply us with the silver requisite to make our table sufficiently imposing in the eyes of comparative strangers.

For on ordinary occasions we ate off, sipped out of, and stirred with electroplate. With the exception of a few bachelor tea-spoons, and a tobacco-box bearing an inscription which tended to perpetuate the remembrance of the grace and dexterity with which a certain undergraduate was once wont to handle an oar, there was not an article of silver in the house. It is true that our tea-pot has hitherto always borne the credit of being genuine, but that was owing to a ruse of mine; for, learning at an early period of hymeneal initiation that plated tea-pots were distinguished by the thickness of their nozzles, I had ours fitted with a silver spout, and *did* the gossips.

We were not wealthy or titled, it is true; but

most people with our income and position have some little property sunk in precious stones and metals; while I do not believe that the most enterprising pawnbroker would have advanced twenty pounds upon our united stock of rings, brooches, chains, watches, and other trinkets. We were married with the joyous approbation of our respective relations, yet our wedding-presents were not so handsome as those often bestowed by them upon comparative strangers on like occasions, but ran mostly to illustrated Byrons, papier-mâché knives, and cut-glass butter-coolers. Our children had been godfathered and godmothered in a genteel and Christian manner, yet their little mugs were made of delf, not silver. The fact was, that no one cared to give us, nor did we feel inclined to buy, either plate or jewellery, because at most it was only five to one against my wife being heiress to about the largest collection of gold and silver articles, and, above all, of emeralds and diamonds, possessed by any private individual in England; in a word, she was the favourite niece, and the promised inheritor, of Sir Peter Sparkles.

An astrologer who once cast Sir Peter's horoscope, said that he was born when the Gemini were in conjunction with Aquarius, which accounts, perhaps, for his instinctive perception of the fineness of the water of precious stones, and the mania he had for their acquisition. This taste, which in very early life had been comparatively harmless, had become developed and fostered by an accidental opportunity which occurred to him, while serving against Tippoo, in India, of purchasing looted jewels of inestimable value for a hundred pounds or so; and having thus formed the nucleus of a collection, he devoted the remainder of his life, his own considerable fortune, and that of the two wives whom (for virtuous reasons, principally) he had at different times married, to its increase and enrichment; so that at the age of seventy-five he was a childless, solitary old man, with an annuity, which he had taken the precaution to purchase, of two hundred a year for his sole support; but with plate which might have furnished the mess-table of a volunteer regiment officered by the Rothschilds, Barings,

Childs, and Couttses, and jewels enough to set a couple of monarchs up in regalia, all in an iron-bound fire-proof closet at the back of his bed.

While he was somewhat like other men, before he had secluded himself from his fellow-creatures, and spent his last ten thousand pounds upon a sapphire which had caused two wars, and three coups-d'état, he had taken a great fancy to the daughter of his favourite sister, who had died under somewhat affecting circumstances, had had the child to stay with him on several occasions, and had spoken of her as holding a most prominent position in his will. Better still; when that little girl grew up, and married the present writer, she received a letter from her crotchety uncle on her wedding-morning, apologising for not sending her some little ornament, on the plea that it would 'spoil the collection,' but consoling her with the promise, that it should all be hers one day; and so we contented ourselves with mother-of-pearl studs, ivory brooches, and silken watch-guards; our fingers and ears were, with one unavoidable exception, ringless; and our plate was all make-believe, pending the time when we should make our selection from Sir Peter Sparkles's hoards, prior to converting the bulk into three per cent. annuities.

Our chance of inheriting was certainly a good one, but not so hollow a thing as it might appear at first sight. There were four other competitors entered besides my wife, all of whom were 'well in,' and doubtless each stable thought the chances of its own horse were the best.

First, Paul Sneeziński, the son of Sir Peter Sparkles's first wife by a former marriage. This young man had a sort of moral right to the magnificent head-dress and stomacher of brilliants, which had belonged to his Polish mother; and Sir Peter had, in writing, admitted the claim.

Secondly, Don Esteban de Santiago, a South American gentleman, had certainly been disappointed of inheriting a number of emeralds of rare size and water, which would probably have come into his possession, had not his foolish old aunt been caught by the attentions and title (the value of which she somewhat over-estimated) of the English baronet; and as the Don had refrained from even attempting to pistol or stiletto the intruding uncle, that gentleman had felt the extent of his obligations towards him, and had promised that he too should find himself all the better for his forbearance when that death befell which he had refrained from anticipating.

Thirdly, Lord Montechristo, a rival collector of rare jewels, had once proposed to Sir Peter Sparkles that the one who died first should leave his stock to the survivor, and so, at all events, delay the dispersion of the gems, which it had taken so much time, labour, and expense to gather together; and Sir Peter had seemed pleased by the idea, though he would not positively pledge himself to the arrangement.

Fourthly, Heziah Buggins, Sir Peter's house-

keeper, was supposed to make him very comfortable, and to be an artful, designing woman. She certainly had done her best of late years to prevent the old man's relatives from obtaining an interview with him; but that might have been in deference to his express orders. However that might be, her chance was considered a good one, and she was quite a favourite (in the dialect of the betting-ring, mind you, and by no means in any affectionate sense of the term) amongst those who watched the event with interest.

Four to one on the field would have been very safe betting, for we were all 'dark horses;' and though we were standing, figuratively, cap in hand, round the old man's jewel-closet, it would have puzzled Admiral de Rous himself to have handi-capped us.

This was the state of the odds and latest news at the (chimney) Corner on the morning when my wife was reckoning up all the friends whose silver she could borrow; but while she was absorbed in her calculations, the post came in, and a black-bordered letter was placed in my hands, which quite dispersed all her plans.

'I do not know any one who has fish-knives,' she was saying at the moment I opened it, 'which is a pity, for I like the fashion vastly. Do you think you could hire any?'

'It will not be necessary to do so now,' I rejoined, 'nor will you be able ever to borrow plate again, for we shall either have a superfluity, or be left without excuse for not providing ourselves with what is needful from our own resources.'

'What! Uncle Peter?'

'Is dead.'

'Poor old man!'

But when a man is very old and very cracked, and one has not seen him for years, one cannot feel inconsolably grieved at his decease, even if he be one's mother's brother, especially while uncertain whether he has left one anything. My wife is not a humbug, so she did not cry, but turned very pale, and the next thing she said was: 'Now we shall know!'

All the horses came to the post, or rather, to drop the sporting metaphor which struck me so whimsically at the time, that I am unable to help introducing it while telling my story, all five expectants were at the funeral. Paul Sneeziński and Don Esteban, who were in England with a view to urging their respective claims upon the old man (whom their agents had represented as declining rapidly), but who had been foiled in their attempts to gain access to him; Lord Montechristo—who had left his jewels to the other, and felt that he had a right to count upon reciprocity—and myself, were all present by special invitation; Mrs Buggins was in the house *ex officio*.

What a demoralising thing that greediness is; the solemnity of death, the hope of immortality, the thought that the poor body which we were hiding away in the earth was but the other day living, talking, planning as we then were, and that in a few short years, at furthest, we should be helpless, senseless, dark like it; the moral lesson taught by the little good the dead man had derived from his hoarded treasures, seeing that a penny given to a beggar (*lent*, we are told) would be of more value to him now than the Koh-i-nûr—to all this we were deaf and blind; the one thought which dinned in our ears, and swam before our eyes was, who will

inherit? I felt it myself, and I saw it in the eyes, and especially in the lips, of my companions; that was our only thought. We returned to the house, and gathered in the sitting-room; the lawyer opened the will. I wonder whether the principal end and aim of all legal documents is to spoil as much parchment as possible before coming to the point; if so, they are marvellously successful, and the present will was a master-piece; at last the name Montechristo surged out of a sea of words, and this is an abridgment of what followed: 'I know that there was a sort of understanding between Lord Montechristo and myself that the one who died first should leave his collection to the survivor, and this I at one time fully intended to adhere to; but the serious considerations upon death and responsibility called up by the making of my will, and putting down in black and white what I desired might be done when I was no more, together with a chapter in the Bible, upon which I accidentally lit, about a man who hid his talent in a napkin, diverted me from an act of so great injustice; and if Lord Montechristo has fulfilled his part of the proposed agreement, to which, however, he must remember that I never absolutely pledged myself, I can only beg his forgiveness.'

Lord Montechristo turned scarlet.

'Forgiveness!' he cried. 'Why, it is a breach of contract, a swindle, an attempt to obtain money under false pretences; why, I have left him, on my side, every diamond, every'—

'Pardon me, my lord,' said the lawyer; 'this outburst is hardly opportune. If you have any legal remedy, bring it forward afterwards; if not, remember that it is hardly reasonable to expect the present company to sympathise with your disappointment.'

He was right: we were delighted; one horse was out of the race, and the odds were a point less against each of the remainder. The reading of the will was continued.

'I feel that Paul Sneezinski ought to have his mother's jewels; but I neither like the idea of any property which has once belonged to an Englishman going out of the country, except for value received, nor can I bear to break up the collection with my own hand. If my heir likes to make them over to him, or to compensate him in any other way, she is free to do so.'

It was evidently Paul Sneezinski's first impulse to tear his hair and use bad language, but he remembered that some one had to be conciliated, and restrained himself.

'The same remarks apply to Don Esteban de Santiago, though, of course, his claims to compensation are infinitely inferior to those of the Pole.'

Don Esteban smiled bitterly, bowed elegantly, drew himself up to his full height, and commenced twirling his moustaches.

The race now lay between Heziah Buggins and myself. I do not know how I looked, but my heart beat at a tremendous pace, and there was a look of insolent triumph in the full and rosy (not to say 'bloated') face of my opponent, which made me fear the worst.

'To my housekeeper, Heziah Buggins'—

'Yes, sir, that's me; go on quick, please!'

'I bequeath all that she has robbed me of during the years that she has been in my service, so that now she can with truth call herself an honest woman; may she remain so! For any disappoint-

ment she may now feel, she may thank herself; her system of intimidation drove me to deceive her. She must have feathered her nest comfortably; let her be content. Finally, to my niece'—

In short, I was left sole heir. All the gold, silver, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, topazes, &c., were bequeathed to me. I say 'to me,' because husband and wife are one, more especially in the case of property accruing to the latter.

I sent off at once for my wife, according to agreement; and considering the great value of the property, and the public attention which had been drawn to that fact, and all the other singular circumstances of the case, I applied to the authorities for a policeman to remain in the house until I could get the will proved, and the valuables removed; and I determined not to leave myself before I could take them with me. So I sat up all night in the room in which the old man had lived and died, with a box of cigars and a bottle of whisky on the table, a bright fire, and a simmering kettle on the hearth, and a document which had been folded up with the will in my hand. I had had the bed removed, and the door of the iron closet could be seen from where I sat. My wife, more philosophical or weary than myself, slept on a sofa in the adjoining drawing-room; the policeman was in the dining-room down stairs. Altogether, considering the watch that was kept, and the fact of the house being in a row in a frequented quarter, I felt that my property was pretty safe.

The difficulty threatened to lie in getting at it, for the paper which had been tied up with the will, and which was in Sir Peter's own handwriting, ran thus: 'The person who opens the jewel-closet must be careful, or he will inevitably be shot. I have always had a great taste for mechanical contrivances, and some skill in locksmiths' work; and for the last ten years I have devoted all my time and ingenuity to the perfection of an apparatus so fixed within the closet that the outward movement of the door for a space of more than two inches should cause six pistol-barrels to explode simultaneously: one upwards, one downwards, two laterally, and two straight to the front. The iron rod which connects the door with the trigger, any pressure upon which will fire the machine, was to have been raised, and so rendered harmless, by pulling a wire, the end of which I intended to hang on a nail just inside the left top corner of the door, and easily got at when the door was opened *one inch*, thus leaving a margin of an inch for the benefit of bunglers, as, unless the door revolves on its hinges two full inches, it is utterly impossible that the barrels should go off. My later years have been rendered wretched by perpetual fear of robbers. The infirmities of age crept upon me; I felt myself growing weaker and weaker; I could not trust my servant; and it was with feelings of delight and triumph that, not quite a year ago, I completed a work which had cost me so much time and labour, and which a skilled blacksmith could have done for me in a few days, had I known one whom I dared to trust. I arranged the apparatus, and quietly closed the door until, when there was only the exact gap of two inches left, I heard the iron rod click into its place. I was standing on a chair with the end of the wire, which when pulled would render the instrument harmless, in my hand, and I now



proceeded to hitch it by a loop which I had twisted in the further end on to the appointed nail. At that moment, some one came to the door of the room; I started, and dropped the wire, which sprang into the interior of the closet, and rattled down on the gold and silver dishes.

'It is nine months and four days since I have seen my treasures. My diamonds, that a prince might covet; my emeralds, that have sparkled in the sword-hilt of the warrior; my goblets, carved by Benvenuto Cellini; my loves, my children, to enjoy which, perpetually and undisturbed, I have separated myself from my kind, and become a sort of Mammon hermit, are there, separated from me by a mere plank, and I cannot see them, cannot gloat over their glittering beauties, cannot touch them, cleanse them, polish them!'

There was a good deal more: the poor old man had evidently thought of sending for his niece and myself to take care of him and his treasures, while he trusted some workman with the task of extracting them for him, but determined to wait until he was worse or better before he took this step. He lamented his illness and weakness, and moralised a bit, taking himself for a text. But there was nothing new or original about the composition, and I do not think that it would be generally interesting *in extenso*. The details which I have extracted were excessively interesting to my wife and self, though; and when I was fully entitled to take possession, I sent for a clever locksmith, the lawyer, and a detective—the last I thought might be useful in suggesting plans for the avoidance of danger—and held a grand consultation upon how to crack our nut and get at the kernel.

My confidence in the detective was not misplaced; he listened to all our ingenious devices in judicial silence, and when we had quite done, said: 'Would it not be simpler to break in at the back of the cupboard?'

Of course it would; we all saw that now. It was the old story of the leather portmanteau, which can be ripped up with a penknife, secured by a Bramah lock of labyrinthine intricacy. On examination, we found that the closet was built against the partition-wall, so that the back could not be got at without going into the next house. So the next inquiry was, who lived there? A city clerk and his wife, we soon learned; young people who had been there about a month, and were not likely, one would hope, to prove cantankerous. The police-officer offered to 'square it,' as he said, with them, and having done so in a remarkably short space of time, we proceeded to the next house, leaving one of the party behind to guide us by knocking against the wall to the right spot for commencing operations. We soon found it; it was in a bedroom, the nuptial-chamber, unfortunately, but that had been already perceived and considered in the compensation. Quickly was the bright fresh paper torn from the wall, and easily did the locksmith and a workman whom he had called to his assistance effect an entrance. Too easily, alas! for some thief had caught the same idea as the detective; and when we gained admittance into the closet, we found a complicated arrangement of pistol-barrels, but nothing else—not a brilliant, not a ruby, not an ounce of gold or silver.

I investigated, I inquired, I threw much good money after the bad. The present tenants were

proved to be innocent; the former ones could not be traced; and to this day, no one knows who the very dark horse was that actually carried off the plate.

### ORDNANCE.

THE science of artillery at the present day has attained a very high state of perfection. Similar words to these were very likely uttered some fifty years after gunpowder was first used as an artillery agent; and the individual who made, and brought to the notice of the Ordnance Select Committee of that period, his wretched little hooped gun, perhaps a 1-pounder, was doubtless considered as great a man in his generation as Sir William Armstrong is in this. Neither the last-named gentleman, nor any of the numerous inventors of modern ordnance, are original in their systems of 'coiled' and 'built-up' guns—that is, guns composed of wrought-iron hoops or rings. The earliest patterns in existence are thus constructed; of course, they are but small and of rude manufacture, but the principle is there.

During many years, the artillery has been called the right hand of the army; and truly so, for by its agency battles are chiefly commenced, sustained, and decided. This branch of military organisation demands, therefore, the appliance of all the energy, skill, and knowledge of the subject that can be brought to bear upon it. The numerous scientific and costly experiments directed by the members of the Ordnance Select Committee, shew that the British government is far from being behind the rest of the world in its endeavours to raise the ordnance equipment to its highest attainable perfection; and the weekly trials of every sort of weapon and projectile have produced a host of inventors, each with his peculiar hobby, firmly convinced that his, and his only, is the correct article, from which no deviation can be attempted with success, and that the Select Committee who object to his ideas are ignorant and prejudiced. Notwithstanding such competition, no one has yet brought forward a gun that really rivals Sir William Armstrong's rifled cannon.\*

Previous to the year 1853, the weapon used by the infantry portion of the British army was a clumsy smooth-bore musket, which was only effective up to three hundred yards at the furthest; the usual distance at which practice was made by the soldier seldom exceeding one hundred yards. In the above-named year, an arm was brought into use, termed, from the locality of its manufacture, the Enfield rifle. This weapon being lighter, and possessing a much greater range than the old small-arm, Brown Bess, as it was called, threatened very seriously to diminish the effect, if not to abolish entirely field-artillery, as, indeed, many infantry officers were sanguine enough to predict. Nor were they without good reason for their boasting, the only field-artillery consisting of 6-pounder brass guns for horse-artillery, 9-pounder guns for

\* The word cannon is not technical, being excluded from the military dictionary, and supplanted by the term 'gun,' which civilians commonly take to mean a fowling-piece. We may also here mention that the word 'ordnance' has a double meaning—the first signifying the corps of Artillery and Engineers, with their various departments; the second referring to guns, and all stores connected with, and appertaining to the same.

field-batteries, and sometimes 12-pounder and 18-pounder guns as batteries of position—that is to say, batteries used when the general of a force meant to make any stand in a suitable position; on these occasions, the guns were taken to the requisite places, and there left. Now, all these guns were smooth-bored; and as the range of the 6 and 9 pounders was limited in practice to about one thousand yards, it was a fair enough supposition, that a company of concealed riflemen with their Enfield rifles could pick off the gunners and remain themselves comparatively secure, especially as their muskets being sighted up to, and effective at, eleven hundred yards, the guns also would be a good mark to aim at, and the riflemen hard to see, even if exposed.

Such was the state of affairs when Mr William Armstrong stepped in to the rescue of the artillery, and provided the British government with the rifled cannon now in use, and about which so much has been written and said, that were this paper an argument for or against it, it would be superfluous. It is, however, written merely to give our unmilitary readers, who probably hardly know what an Armstrong gun is, a slight idea of the difference between the old ordnance which, with the aid of British pluck, covered our nation with glory at Trafalgar, the Nile, Waterloo, and other places, and our present more serviceable weapons.

The only smooth-bored guns in the service are those distinguished by their weight of shot or shell, as follow: solid shot guns, 3, 6, 9, 12 pounders, made of bronze; 18, 24, 32, and 68 pounders, made of cast iron; there are also two others—namely, 42 and 56 pounders, but the issue of these has been discontinued. These guns also throw shells. Shell-guns—10 and 8 inch guns—that is, guns whose calibre or size of bore admits shells of the above-named diameters. Solid shot are never fired from these guns, as they are not made strong enough for that purpose. These are all, as is well known, loaded at the muzzle. We may as well mention that these pieces are divided into three classes—garrison, siege, and field artillery. The brass guns are all field-guns; the 12-pounder, and sometimes, when practicable, the iron 18-pounder, being used as guns of position—that is, to be placed in action in such positions as it is necessary to dispute, and from which it is not expected that it will be necessary to remove them. The 3-pounder is principally intended for mountain-service, and is all but useless. The 18, 24, and 32 pounders are generally those which compose the bulk of a siege-train; the higher calibres are used for the navy, and for garrison and coast defences. For a smooth-bored gun, the 68-pounder of 112 hundred-weight is considered the best known, its shot attaining a much greater initial velocity than those of Armstrong rifled guns. The latter, however, retain their velocity for a much greater range, and in the end have four times the momentum of the former, when the weights of the respective shot are the same. It is still contended by many able officers that this gun is the best for the navy; but when we consider that wrought-iron guns of three times the size can be safely made, it is impossible to credit that ships cannot be constructed to carry guns of much greater weight than the 68-pounder. Opinions vary so much on this point, that time alone can decide the question. All the foregoing ordnance is constructed on the same plan:

the guns are cast solid blocks, approximate to the size and weight required, and are then bored to the right diameter. The Americans have succeeded in casting guns on a hollow core, so that little is left to bore out; and by cooling from the interior of the core, they are supposed to gain a uniformity of 'tension' in the metal, which guns cast in a solid mass do not acquire. As these pieces of ordnance have to be loaded from the muzzle, it is necessary that the shot should fit loosely, and the difference between the diameters of the shot and the bore is called the windage. This is the principal reason, as far as the gun (and not the projectile) is concerned, for irregularity of fire from smooth bores. First, one-fourth of the force of the gunpowder is wasted through the escape thus afforded; secondly, the centre of the ball is below the axis of the bore, and therefore the force exercised by the gas escaping above it, causes the shot to rebound from the bottom, and strike against the upper surface, and so on till it leaves the muzzle. From this action it is manifest that the flight of such a projectile must be irregular, to say the least. The bore of the gun is also injured by the shot thus striking it, and more especially in brass guns, which are generally deeply indented at the seat of the shot, after a few rounds have been fired. Cast-iron guns must necessarily be much heavier than those made of wrought iron, as they require so much more metal to resist the discharge. The rifled guns, from firing elongated shot, require less diameter of bore for projectiles weighing as much as the shot belonging to heavier descriptions of smooth-bore guns. Notwithstanding that the range of rifled guns is so great, and their precision of fire excellent, there are yet many cases in which smooth-bores may be used with great advantage; for instance, in all batteries whose range is confined from the nature of the ground; in casemates connected with ditches of fortifications, and other such localities. The canister and grape from large smooth-bore guns would be more effective at short ranges than the Armstrong segment shell, which it has been found difficult to explode directly it leaves the muzzle, for want of a proper fuse. Howitzers also are still much wanted in the field; and it will be necessary to employ the old stock until the government consents to the formation of batteries of rifled howitzers, of which they already possess patterns.

So much is known of smooth-bored ordnance, that we may dismiss the subject, and turn to a consideration of its successful rival, Sir William Armstrong's rifled wrought-iron guns. The general appearance of the Armstrong gun is that of a large telescope pulled out to its greatest length. It consists of an inner tube (the manufacture of which will be hereafter described), upon which a number of cylinders are shrunk, each one of less length than that beneath, until the last, which is round the breech. The object of this arrangement is to meet the force of the powder in the proportion it is exerted, the main shock being at the breech, and decreasing as the shot yields to the gas generated by the ignition of the charge. These strengthening bands, or coils, as they are technically termed, depend in size and number on the gun for which they are required, in some reaching as far as the front of the trunnions as in the 110-pounders, the first tube of which is covered by a second of the same length. The barrel is bored throughout, not being

closed in at the breech, which for some space is 'turned' out large enough to contain a hollow screw, whose internal diameter is that of the gun, thus enabling the shot and cartridge to be loaded through the aperture. In front of this screw, a rectangular socket is cut down from the upper surface of the gun; this socket, or *slot*, as it is technically called, receives a stopper or plug, which fits accurately against the bore where it is cut through by the slot; and when the breech-screw is turned up, it presses forward the stopper so forcibly as to withstand the back action of the charge when it is fired. This plug is called the *vent-piece*, as a vent is bored therein so as to come in contact with the centre of the cartridge.

The breech-screw is worked in the following manner: the end projects from the rear of the gun, and is octagonal on its outer surface in order to receive a ring, called the *tappit ring*; this has two projections or *cams* on its exterior, which is round; a projection on a second ring in rear of the first comes in contact with the above; this ring is worked by a handle or lever, weighted, the end being shaped as a heavy ball, and is free to move a half-circle round the breech-screw; the *cams* then work against each other, and the breech-screw is turned in either direction as may be required. In the large guns, two levers are attached to the ring. The method of loading the gun is as follows: the breech-screw is unscrewed by one or two blows of the lever, which enables the vent-piece to be moved; the bore is examined to see if it is clear, and a shot is introduced into the breech-screw, and rammed into its place past the vent-slot; a cartridge is next added, the vent-piece *dropped in*\* (if retained by the hand, it would not screw home, and might be blown out), the breech screwed home, and the gun is ready for priming and firing. The elevation and direction are given by a scale with a leaf-head to it on the side of the breech, and by a dispart sight on the trunnion. The leaf is cut by two cross-slits—the vertical one giving direction, the horizontal, elevation; the object to be struck being brought in line with the junction of the two, and the top of the trunnion sight. The field rifled gun rests upon a bed or 'saddle,' which can be moved to the right or left by a traversing screw, so that the direction can be corrected with great accuracy. There remains little to be said with regard to the material connected with the Armstrong gun, as the carriages, both field and garrison, are the same, with trifling modifications, as those of smooth-bored ordnance.

We will now proceed to describe the manufacture of the Armstrong ordnance, as it is carried on in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. On application to the War-office, a card of admission to the arsenal can be obtained by any one wishing to see the factories, and a very pleasant morning may be passed in a visit to the same, even by those who have no particular interest in the matter. The principle of construction is the same in the large as in the small guns, and without therefore specifying any particular calibre, the following is the method pursued. The principle generally is that on which ordinary fowling-piece barrels are made. The iron used is of a peculiar nature, furnished by contractors, and not worked up in the arsenal. It is

supplied in long bars, which are forged and rolled out by machinery. The transverse section of a bar is not rectangular, but wedge-shaped, with the apex cut off, that is to say, two opposite sides of the section are equal, but the upper side is greater than the lower. These bars are converted into cylinders in this manner. The first part of the gun to be made is the inner tube, which extends the entire length of the gun; it is composed of several cylinders known technically as 'coils;' each coil is made of a single bar cut to the requisite length, and thus treated: a long, low furnace is heated, and the bar to be used is placed therein, until it attains a red heat; it is then ready for the coiling-machine, which is erected close to the end of the furnace, and consists of a solid roller, or 'mandril,' revolving on pivots in the heads of two upright posts, the revolution being effected by machinery. The mandril is slightly coned, one end being of greater diameter than the other, in order that the coil may be easily removed, and also for the same reason, it is black-leaded; before the bars are heated, each end is tapered, so that, when the coil is completed, they shall not project, and thus the ends of the cylinder are level. A hole is punched in one end of the bar, which is curved so as to fit at once to the mandril. The heated bar is withdrawn from the furnace, and by means of the hole, fitted on to a pin in the side of the mandril, which is set in motion, and the bar is rolled up, and becomes a cylinder. In order to insure the bar coiling firmly round the mandril, it passes along over a rest between the furnace and the machine, so close to the latter, that the iron is forced to bend in the direction of the coiling. The end requires a few blows of a hammer, and the coiling is complete; the mandril is hoisted on end, and the coil detached. The arrangement before attended to is necessary to facilitate its removal, as the iron in cooling soon becomes contracted, and would fasten so firmly to the roller as to be separated with difficulty. The mandril is put in water to cool, and a fresh roller substituted, in order not to impede the work. The bars are of different thicknesses, according to the guns for which they are intended, and are rolled up with the broadest side uppermost, as, when coiled, the outer edge having to describe a greater circumference than the inner, becomes stretched to the same width, the sides of the spirals come into proper contact, and the fibre of the iron is not too much strained, having enough metal to stretch to the right length. The coiling above described is the principal feature of the manufacture of the gun; and it may be easily observed that this method of arranging the iron, so that its fibres shall be in the direction of the circumference, gives an amount of strength, that can never be obtained by cast iron, or by forgings, the iron of which depends on the chance of the hammer for its quality and direction of fibre.

The next process is that of welding the spirals of the coil together so as to form a cylinder. The last work left thus unfinished; and however closely the bar may be coiled, the cooling causes the iron to shrink and leave spaces. The coils are removed to a different workshop, and placed in furnaces, and by their agency heated to a welding heat, that is nearly, if not quite, a white heat. When at the proper degree of heat, the doors of the furnace are opened, and without delay, the glowing mass is placed on end beneath a powerful steam-hammer,

\* Negligence in this respect is the cause of most of the accidents that have happened with these guns.



and by repeated blows the whole of the spirals are welded till they become one; this shortens and thickens the coil more than is wanted, and therefore it is turned over horizontally, and hammered until the cylinder is of the proper diameter externally; then, for the internal diameter, a large iron bolt is forced through by means of the steam-hammer; and by a few finishing blows, wherever required, the coil is finished enough to pass into the turner's hands. All forgings of this sort are usually left about three-fourths of an inch too large in every direction, so that any inequality may be corrected in the turning-lathe. Those of our readers who are unacquainted with the steam-hammer would find great pleasure in seeing the performances of this machine, a wonder which would startle Vulcan himself, and make him renounce his trade, could he see it at work. A ponderous block of iron constitutes the hammer-head, and a vertical rod is fastened to its upper surface; this rod is moved up and down by steam-power in much the same manner as the pistons or shafts which most people have seen working in the engines of a steamer. The man who works the hammer can so guide its strength, by regulating the supply of steam, that by one blow he can bring the weight down within a hairbreadth of the anvil, and by the next, can exert its entire force, breaking to shreds a thick piece of wood, and making the building tremble and the air reverberate with the noise. A filbert can be just cracked by a hammer weighing five tons, while a mass of cast iron can be shattered by the same machine. As an instance of what is required to withstand its force, we may mention that the block to receive the anvil of one of these steam-giants required a mass of fifteen or sixteen tons of cast iron, which did not cool through for a fortnight after casting.

The coils are taken thus forged to the turning-lathes, and smoothed and finished both inside and out to a nicety; scarcely any margin being allowed the workman, so great is the accuracy required in this department. The iron is turned in these lathes with as much apparent ease as if, instead of being hard metal, it were merely cheese: the shavings that come off, if the iron be very good, are of great unbroken length. Three or four coils are requisite to form the inner tube. These are all turned with inner and outer shoulders, so as to fit into each other: first, two are thus fitted, and the join heated in a furnace to a welding heat, the outer ends not being in the fire; a bar is placed through the two, fastened by a clamp at one end, and with a powerful lever and screw at the other; when the junction is properly heated, the lever is worked, the screw forces the coils together, and the two become as firmly welded as if they had been forged solid. The part thus welded, however, becomes enlarged, and has to be again placed under the hammer till of the proper diameter. Each successive coil is thus added till the tube is complete. In the larger guns—namely, the 110-pounder—a second tube is placed over this. It has this difference, that an extra length is put on; this is the breech, which is a solid forging, not a rolled coil, and the fibres of the iron run horizontally, and not in the direction of the circumference; this is in order that the backward action of the discharge should have greater resistance, and not be liable to open the coils. The tubes thus far made are

carefully finished and gauged, accuracy at this stage being of the utmost importance.

We now come to that portion of the manufacture from which these have been termed 'built-up' guns. The inner tube is left just so large that it cannot enter the outer, when both are of the same temperature; but as iron expands when heated, and contracts when re-cooled, advantage of this quality is thus taken. The former is left cool, and placed upright on a support, and a jet of cold water passed down its interior; the latter is heated till it has expanded sufficiently to pass over the other. When the two tubes are in their relative positions, they are secured, and left to cool; when both are cold, they are so firmly joined, that no force on earth could separate them without breaking. By re-heating the outer tube, and keeping the inner cool, they can be again separated; and in this manner a gun, completely finished, can be taken to pieces, and, if necessary, repaired. In a similar manner, the successive outer coils are shrunk on one by one, until the entire gun is built up, and the detail of finishing alone remains to be carried out.

The breech-screw is a solid forging bored out to the requisite diameter, and turned with a screw on the exterior. The vent-piece is a block of wrought iron with a neck to it, which acts as a handle to lift it out by. The vent is drilled down from the top through the neck until it reaches the centre, when it is met by another hole at right angles, which leads into the bore of the gun, in the centre of the hinder end of the cartridge. The space in front of the vent-piece which receives the charge is left smooth, so as to insure the easy loading of the shot, which is larger in diameter than the grooves. The rest of the barrel is rifled with a number of very small grooves, varying from thirty to forty, according to the size of the bore. The projectiles are coated with lead, as will be hereafter described, and are forced through the grooves, thus taking the rifling exactly, and causing the longer axis of the shot to coincide with the axis of the gun—an essential point with elongated projectiles. The lever and ring are solid forgings, and have nothing peculiar in their manufacture. The rifling—that is to say, the cutting the grooves in the bore which give rotation to the projectile—is performed as follows. We are now describing the method employed for the service-guns, not those which are experimental. The cutter with which the groove is to be made is a small sharp steel tooth, which is arranged at the end of a bar, so that it can be withdrawn into a recess in the bar, or be forced out at will: the gun is placed with the muzzle opposite this cutter, which is, of course, worked by machinery. When the machinery is set in motion, the bar enters the bore, and a weight falling, draws in the cutter, so that the bar passes through the bore without touching it; when it reaches to the far end—that is, the breech—the weight is released, and the cutter is pressed down into the bore, and the motion of the machine withdraws the bar, pulling or scraping out in its return a thin ribbon of the metal of the gun. Three or four times is the operation repeated, and the groove is cut to its proper depth. So far, we have merely described the cutting; but it is necessary that this groove should be spiral in the bore, and not parallel to its axis. The manner in which this is performed is very ingenious and simple. The bar with the

cutter revolves as it is withdrawn ; so that, supposing the cutter to commence its work at the upper surface of the bore, by the time it leaves the same, it is on the lower surface, or the side, according to the amount of twist required for the spiral. The twist and its amount are thus given. The cutter moves in a frame along a slide ; one end of the bar fits into a socket in the frame, and has cogs or ratchet-teeth on it : at right angles to the slide is a bar with similar cogs fitting into the above ; another bar is fitted at an angle to the slide ; and as the cutter leaves the bore of the gun, the toothed bar is forced to follow this angle, and its cogs fitting into the cogs of the cutting bar, cause the latter to revolve as it moves, and thus describe a spiral in the gun, cutting the required groove. Upon the angle at which the side-bar is fixed, depends the amount of 'twist' given to the rifling : if placed at a large angle, the twist, of course, would be rapid ; at a small angle of, say two degrees, the rifling would be almost parallel to the axis. Were we to enter into the subject of the best spiral that can be given, we should require to write a volume, as opinions are so various on the matter. It is sufficient to state, what does not seem to be known by many who should be better acquainted, that the twist for a gun depends chiefly on the projectile to be used with it : the Whitworth shot being long, and of small diameter, requires a very severe turn to cause it to rotate properly round its longer axis ; the Armstrong shot requires a much less turn, and it is shorter, and, consequently, there is not the tremendous strain on the metal that the former weapon is subjected to. A Whitworth shot fired with the same rotation requisite for an Armstrong projectile, would be comparatively useless.

The gun being completed, the next point to consider is the projectile to be used therewith. For length of range and penetration, the best form of shot is that used by Mr Whitworth, and this fact has led many to suppose that the guns proposed by this gentleman must necessarily be the best. This is an error. The shot is of small diameter in proportion to its length, and tapers at each end ; its very form, therefore, renders it useless except as a shot, as it cannot contain enough powder to be efficient as a common shell ; and from its taper and small diameter, the metal cannot be disposed as a segment or shrapnell shell. Now, it is indispensable that artillery should possess, at least, the following projectiles in an efficient form.

First, solid shot ; secondly, common shell—that is, a hollow shot to contain a charge of powder sufficient to set fire to and damage magazines and other buildings of the enemy ; and thirdly, a segment or shrapnell shell, which contains a small charge of powder large enough to open the shell, so that it shall break into the greatest number of pieces, and by its momentum, as derived from the gun, shall, by bursting short of the enemy's troops, send a shower of fragments among them—thus throwing by one shot as many missiles as can be fired by a whole company of riflemen.

By describing the process of manufacture of the segment shell, we shall say all that need be said with reference to the others.

The segment shell is elongated ; that is, it is a hollow cylinder of cast iron, with one end flat, and the other end rounded off to the form termed conoidal ; the bottom is filled in by a cast-iron

plug ; this is made separately. Inside the cylinder, which is thin, and therefore brittle, is a second hollow cylinder, composed of segments of iron shaped alike ; the cylinder thus being, of course, composed of as many pieces as there are segments. These are built up on the iron bottom, and all hammered or pressed into the outer case of the shell, when it then resembles a solid shot. The hollow left in the middle of the segments is to contain a bursting charge of powder. The outside of the shell is prepared to receive a coating of lead, by being dipped in a zinc bath, the shell and the bath being, of course, of certain regulated temperatures. The zinc has an affinity for iron and also for lead, so that no galvanic action can take place, as frequently happened when the zinc was not used. The lead is poured into a mould in which the shell has been fixed, and it afterwards is turned in a lathe to the required diameter, &c. ; the lead is allowed to percolate between the segments, and thus bind them a little closer together. It will be at once seen that the form of the segments gives them the strength of the arch, which will bear any weight on its outside, while a slight pressure from within will destroy the structure ; and thus the projectile can be fired from a gun, and penetrate wood and earthworks, while an ounce of powder exploded within will shatter the 12-pounder shell into more than one hundred and fifty fragments. These shells are usually fired at troops, so as to burst fifty yards short by means of a time-fuse, lighted by discharge of the gun, and set according to the distance of the enemy. The fragments proceed with the impetus at which the shell was moving, and fall in a shower amongst the troops. We have not space to enter into the merits of the many systems of guns recommended by their various patrons, and have merely briefly described the principal points with reference to the manufacture of the Armstrong guns in the service, without reference to the 600-pounder and 300-pounder at Shoeburyness. It is impossible to foretell what the future may reveal ; but should we be forced into war even at the present day, we are confident that British mechanics and British metal have produced a field-gun that has no superior, in range, accuracy, and efficiency of projectile, in any foreign army whatsoever. The large purchases by the Americans of our warlike material, furnished by merchants whose wares have been rejected by a select committee appointed by our government to do justice to inventors, does not seem to shew that we have much to fear from foreign superiority in that respect.

## LORD LYNN'S WIFE

### CHAPTER XIV.—CROSS PURPOSES.

WHEN Lord Lynn, within half an hour of his proposals to Aurelia Darcy having been accepted by that lady, and sanctioned in due form by her father, reached Stoke, he found, as he had expected, that the Squire was out. As he had expected, also, Mrs Mainwaring and her eldest daughter were at home, and with them the visitor was soon engaged in conversation, and doing his best to appear thoroughly careless, high in spirits, and light of heart—the more so, perhaps, because the task of announcing his engagement seemed less easy and agreeable than he had been used to fancy it might



be. Hastings Wyvil—he was more accustomed to think of himself under the old name, and the old circumstances, than as the new hereditary legislator and owner of Hollingsley—was a popular man with women; none the less so, perhaps, because his manner, though marked by a certain undefinable tone of chivalric courtesy, was free from awkwardness or shyness, the worst faults, in eyes feminine, that a man can possess; but now he felt awkward, and in a measure guilty, in presence of his kinswomen, and rattled on to hide his embarrassment, laughing and talking much more than was his custom, and watching for an opportunity to mention his betrothal as if it had been a mere common-place, every-day affair, of no especial importance.

This game of the concealment of emotions, however, is one in which men and women do not play on equal terms. A woman—who can herself endure torments to which the fox beneath the tunic of the mythical Spartan boy affords but a tame resemblance, smiling serenely the while under the prying eyes of twenty dear female friends—is not to be hoodwinked by the exaggerated acting of a clumsy male; unless, indeed, she be in love, when her naturally fine perceptions will be somewhat confused. Thus it fell out that, while Lucy merely thought her soldier-cousin a little more excited and animated than usual, Mrs Mainwaring saw how the young man's flow of talk was foreign to what was uppermost in his mind, and that he was manifestly desirous to say something, but perplexed as to how it should be said. Now, Mrs Mainwaring had a sincere liking for Lord Lynn, as the chief of her own name and kin—for was she not herself a Wyvil by blood—as a gallant, high-hearted English gentleman, whose rank, and fortune, and character combined to render him most eligible as a son-in-law. In spite of occasional qualms of doubt, Mrs Mainwaring firmly believed in Lord Lynn's attachment to Lucy. A mother, seeing the visitor's evident agitation, could not be blamed, under the circumstances, for drawing from that agitation a favourable augury for her daughter's happiness, since she was quick-sighted enough to have remarked Lucy's innocent pleasure in her kinsman's company. Nor need Mrs Mainwaring be classed among the more mercenary of match-makers, if she suddenly remembered a most important interview impending with the gardener, *apropos* of the geraniums to be kept alive through winter in the conservatory, and left the young folks alone.

Five minutes before Mrs Mainwaring's departure, Lord Lynn had been fidgeting and longing that she might be called away. He could tell all that need be told, he thought, to Lucy, so much more pleasantly than to her parent. She was his little friend, his sister—he laid great mental stress on that fact—and would understand him at once; young people understood each other by far the best. But such is the sad inconsistency of human nature that, Mrs Mainwaring gone, and the coast clear, Lord Lynn began to regret her absence, and to feel conscious, in a sort of purblind way, that Lucy might not relish the part of *confidante* which he had so cavalierly assigned to her. And yet, why not? She was a dear little thing, and had been much more disposed to hearken to his tales of flood and field, of prairie, and desert, and yellow Nile, and stormy seas, than he to dilate on the

dangers he had confronted; for the guardsman was almost shrinkingly averse from anything that sounded like vaunting or self-praise. So she would—she must take an interest in this, the most momentous step in his life.

Off he went with a plunge, like a whale into a herring-net.

'Lucy,' he began, drawing his chair nearer to that in which she sat, busy with her tapestry-work—'Lucy, you and I are very good friends, and cannot help caring, I am sure, for whatever concerns each other's happiness. I have something to say to you.'

And to help the delivery of that something, the declaration of which seemed to stick in his throat somehow, he took his cousin Lucy's hand in the old cousinly way, half frank, half playful, and looked into her face. Lucy looked down; her colour deepened; and she could not help beginning to tremble very much, angry as she felt with herself for trembling. But Lord Lynn was blinded by his own feelings—by the absurd sublime egotism of a man who is in love, and he saw nothing. On he went.

'When I came here to-day, I meant to speak what was on my mind before your mother, Lucy dear, and put things in a clear light; but I could not get the words out. So I was not sorry when Mrs Mainwaring went, because then I could tell you all about it; and I knew you would be glad, or at least' (for here some instinct seemed to intervene and warn the speaker he was wrong)—'at least, for my sake, you would be interested in what I have decided to do.'

Lucy did not say a word; she sat with burning cheeks and downcast eyes, listening for more; her little hand in Lord Lynn's grasp was hot and cold by turns, and it trembled like a frightened bird. She was not to blame if she misconstrued his meaning; Mrs Mainwaring, bustling among her flower-pots, and pluming herself on her tact in leaving the supposed admiring swain to pour his sighs into the ear of the beloved object, was in exactly the same error.

'Marriage is a serious thing, a serious step, I mean, for a man to take, and I have not been hasty in making my mind up,' Lord Lynn blundered on; 'but I am fairly in love at last—don't laugh at me for confessing it—and in love, I am sure, with the only woman I ever saw with whom I could be thoroughly happy, who realises everything I could have dreamed of—beautiful, good, clever, talented beyond any girl I ever met—much too pretty, and much too clever for'—

'O no, no, no!' murmured Lucy softly, but without looking up—'not clever at all, Hastings. I wish'—

And here she stopped short. There was not a doubt, not the shadow of a misgiving, in Lucy's mind; but the remembrance that the proprieties forbade a young lady to give herself before she had been asked in plain words, put a padlock on her lips. She had nearly been startled into a modest disclaimer of the extravagant laudations which her lover seemed to be heaping upon her. Pretty she was, and good she tried to be, succeeding well enough to satisfy every one but herself; but she was not by any means a genius or brilliantly accomplished, and she could not help entering her simple protest against such undeserved praise, sweet as praise was from the man she loved. She

stopped, blushing like a rose, and averted her face. Lord Lynn was too much taken up with his own ideas to interpret the gesture aright.

'Not clever at all!' he exclaimed almost angrily; 'my dear Lucy, where are your eyes that you cannot see what all the world sees, except you? But you *must* know that she is as wise and gifted as she is lovely, you who have been so much in her company. This is some silly girlish pique or quarrel, of which I thought too well of my little sister to have believed her capable, between you and Aurelia Darcy, which causes'—

Lucy started with a quick convulsive motion, as if she had been stung by a wasp, and she snatched her hand away from him, with an inarticulate cry of actual pain, then turned her sweet crimsoned face, and honest bright brown eyes full upon him as she asked bravely, but with a quivering lip:

'You spoke just now of—of your affection for—for somebody, and—and is it Aurelia Darcy—Aurelia Darcy—to whom you are about to be married?'

'Certainly,' her cousin began; 'whom else could you imagine?' but then stopped in his turn, at the sight of the ghastly pain and anguish stamped on the pretty kind young face opposite to him. He saw at last that Lucy was fighting with an overpowering grief and agitation, that her blushes had given place to a blanched paleness, and that her sweet little face was quite drawn, and pinched, and wan with a great suffering, while her breath came in gasps. Then she hid her face like a true woman, and in an agony of sorrow, shame, misery, blinded by tears, and stifled by sobs, hurried out of the room.

Lord Lynn sprang from his chair. 'Lucy,' he cried; 'Lucy, you crying, dear! I never meant'—

And he tried to catch her hand, but she shrank from him and passed out, and he was left alone. He paced the room, much perturbed. The brave gentleman felt as much ashamed as if he had been doing something cowardly and base. He would have given much, very much indeed, that this had never been. He was no coxcomb to fancy all women in love with him, but Lucy's reception of his tidings could admit of but one solution. And his own accused idiotic blundering, he thought, had brought this about. He had never intended this. He had fondly thought that he might establish Lucy Mainwaring on the footing of a dear sister, and that she would never feel aught but brotherly affection for him. He forgot that cousins are not sisters, and that we have no right to think we can set nature at defiance by our self-constituted relationships. To be sure, he had sometimes thought of Lucy as his possible wife; but then, man-like, he had fancied that the initiative belonged exclusively to himself, and that until he should choose to transform himself into a lover, Lucy's imagination must remain inert. He had never chosen to acknowledge to himself that his attentions, his preference, might be misinterpreted, and that he might have won the girl's innocent heart, merely to wound and pain it.

'I wish this had never happened. I would—yes I would'—muttered Lord Lynn, pacing fiercely to and fro, angry with himself, remorseful, cut to the heart at the stab he had given to that poor little bosom of the good true-souled girl, whose excellence he knew as well as any one knew it. There was no tinge of mean vanity, such as egotists feel at

winning a woman's love unsought, to mingle with Lord Lynn's regret. The words he had begun to say, but had checked himself in saying, for boastfulness was more alien to his nature than anything else, were the sincere thoughts that swelled up in his breast—'I would cut off my right hand, if by so doing I could undo the past, and make Lucy forget all.'

And at the moment he would have done it, so genuine was his remorse. He walked to and fro. He almost wished he had never seen Aurelia. He wished he had never come home; had gone on as he should have done, had his father lived, to the far East. He could never be Lucy's friend again, of course; never meet her trustful eyes again—never, never, never. But he had injured her. What could he do? Should he see her mother, should he explain, express his sorrow? No—a thousand times no. It would make bad worse—turn an injury into an insult. So he left the house, and very sadly and slowly, and with a heavy heart and head, that was never once turned back as of old towards the friendly dwelling he had quitted, he rode away. From beneath her window-blind, Lucy's eyes, dim and dark with tears, watched him as he rode away. He could not see her. He did not know she was looking after him as he went, so she could indulge herself so far, poor little thing. But how she blamed herself for her folly in betraying what she felt. He looked sad as he rode down the avenue, and she felt glad of that, and then took herself to task for feeling glad. He was nothing to her now. He was Aurelia Darcy's betrothed husband. And yet Lucy watched him depart, sore wounded as her simple loving heart had been. But it was not his fault—not his fault at all.

And when Mrs Mainwaring, bitter in her disappointment and indignation, feeling her daughter's anguish in her own motherly breast, smart for smart, was scornful and wrathful in her denunciation of her kinsman—with whom, however, she had now done for ever, and who did well to marry a Manchester miss, since the artful minx had angled for his coronet—Lucy sat quite pale and still. But when the Squire, much moved, gruffly said that he had 'loved Lynn as his own son, and would have been glad to have him as a son-in-law, but not for his title and estate, since if he had been Colonel Wyvil, with nothing but his pay, it would have been all one—before he knew him for a rogue—playing fast and loose with a girl like his, the Squire's, Lucy.'

Lucy said sadly: 'Don't be unjust, papa. He never said a word of love to me. It was all my foolish mistake. It is not his fault, indeed.'

#### CHAPTER IV.—A HARD BARGAIN.

'Is your master at home, young man?'

'And what, pray, do you want with my master?'

thus ran the brief and brisk exchange of query and counter-query on the part of Thomas, Mr Darcy's London-bred footman, who had hastily donned his coat of state on hearing a sharp imperious peal at the door-bell, and the person by whom that peal had been rung. The latter was a little wiry fellow, about forty years of age, dressed in a second-hand black suit, a bulgy white neckcloth, and a very new hat, the gloss and shine of which article of attire, made the shabbiness of the rest of the raiment more conspicuous than

would otherwise have been the case. Thomas eyed this pseudo-ecclesiastical costume with scornful suspicion, identifying it with tracts, begging-letters, forged testimonials, and an urgent appeal to subscribe towards the wearer's passage as a missionary to the Tonga Islands. Nor was the countenance of that wearer much to the taste of the experienced town-bred servitor. For if Game Dick had looked a villain in his dirty suit of slop-shop clothes, smeared with every variety of mud and dust between Wakefield and Warwick, he looked unutterably villainous in his rusty black, with a hypocritical air of sober sanctimoniousness overlying his natural audacity of expression.

'I've particular business with Squire Darcy. Is he at home, if you please?' said Game Dick, shuffling his feet about, and feeling uneasy in his Berlin gloves. The disguise that he had put on was not of his own selection, and he felt awkward in it. As a sporting-farmer, a drover, a horse-dealer, pedler, Jew-clotheman, or smock-frocked countryman, he could have played his part well, as he had done in many a taproom and skittle-alley; but this semi-clerical costume which he had donned when outvoted in solemn council of war by his allies the Browns, was one that went against the grain with him. Accordingly, he acted ill, snuffling and mouthing his words in a way that would have disgusted a less suspicious person than Thomas. The latter took a steady survey of the man's cropped hair, restless eyes, and rat-like face, and resolved to get rid of him at once.

'Now, my man, you've no right to come to this door at all, and the sooner you are off the grounds the better for you. I know your little game very well, but I shall not take in tracts, nor subscription lists, nor none of that gammon. Mr Darcy's not at home, and wouldn't see you if he was; so make yourself scarce, will you?'

All the varnish of Game Dick's affected sanctimoniousness cracked in a moment, and a broad grin replaced it. He had told the Browns how it would be. He was a true prophet; and his superior knowledge being vindicated, he could play the trump-card he held in reserve. Up went one of his gloved forefingers, wagging in the air in that well-known professional style at which he and his like had trembled ever since he matriculated in the thieves' quarter of a northern manufacturing town long years ago. And he winked at Thomas as he said in a loud whisper: 'Look here; I'm on duty, I am. I've come from the police, I have, about that job of the reward—that pistol business. Mr Superintendent Martin told me to keep dark—you understand?' And then came a succession of nods as full of apparent meaning as that of Lord Burleigh in the *Critic*.

Thomas was converted in an instant. He saw nothing extraordinary in the man's rascally countenance, now his errand was told. The Servants' Hall at Beechborough was divided in opinion on the results of the late pursuit after the would-be assassin, and the footman himself had a bet that the hat found was not that of the fugitive, and that the latter had never been drowned at all, but had got off securely to America or elsewhere. And this visitor's cropped hair and vagabond mien corroborated the idea that he was really a spy or agent of the police, which latter body of guardians of order must sometimes work with queer tools, as Thomas was aware.

'That's another affair,' said he civilly—'quite a different thing. I took you—but never mind. Has anything fresh turned up about the murdering fellow?' And here Thomas grew quite eager, for the idea of possessing the talisman of fresh information with which to galvanise the servants of Beechborough quite overthrew his equanimity.

But Game Dick shook his head. 'I'm sworn not to let out nothing, and it's as much as my place is worth, young man, to blab a word of the superintendent's business. One thing I will say: we know what we know, and queer things may come out, so don't you be surprised if there's a grand trial in the papers, and artist coves coming down to take the picter of Beechborough Hall. I can't wait. Is the governor in?'

'No, he really isn't. He's gone in the brougham to Sir Joseph's,' was the answer.

Game Dick affected great disappointment, although no one could have been better aware of Mr Darcy's absence from home than he, considering that he had lain hid for hours among the larches of the plantation, with his keen eyes ever on the gravel-drive. However, he recovered himself, and asked if Miss Darcy were at home, and if so, whether she would condescend to see Brown, sent by Superintendent Martin. Dick Flowerdew used the name of Brown as being known to Aurelia, and Thomas doing the errand without much hesitation, came back to usher the emissary of the police into Aurelia's presence.

Miss Darcy stood, sternly beautiful, beside one of the windows of the Pink Drawing-room, and Game Dick, who had heard her described but had never seen her, winced somewhat as his saucy eyes drooped before the calm pride in her gaze. His experience of women comprised many varieties of character, but never had he seen one like this, and for a moment he wished he had not volunteered to be the spokesman of the gang; but he was committed now, and must go through with it. Aurelia, on the other hand, was also surprised. The name of Brown had misled her, and now she scarcely knew what to think. The man's face was that of a knave, but perhaps he was merely one of the inferior myrmidons of the law, and had come to relate some discovery.

'Mr Darcy, as the servant has told you, is from home. If you have any message I will receive it. You come, I am told, from the police?'

Ordinary words these, but as Game Dick heard them, he felt almost as uncomfortable as if the placid passionless voice had been that of My Lord Judge in ermine and scarlet, passing sentence on Richard Flowerdew, prisoner at the bar. Still he looked up, and said doggedly: 'I come from Nanny Brown's turnpike on the Blanchminster road. My name isn't Brown. I don't belong to the police. I come for your good, miss, if so be you'll hearken to reason.'

'For my good?' Aurelia smiled as she spoke, but it was a freezing smile, and her hand moved towards a little silver hand-bell among the books and knickknacks on the table beside her, while her eyes were as cold and hard as steel. Men of Game Dick's class are used to violence, to threats, and to abuse, and are thickskinned to all these modes of treatment. But cool polished scorn, that contemptuous indifference which the French call *morgue*, crows them. The ex-inmate of Wakefield jail was less happy in Aurelia's presence than he



would have been if that very police superintendent, with whose name he had made free, had grasped his collar in the queen's name. Dick had spoken to ladies before, to silly ladies, timid ladies, giggling ladies, ladies proud of wealth and station, and his cunning had availed to palm worthless jewellery, or rotten muslins, or stolen shawls, upon them; but he had never seen any one like Aurelia, and now he felt himself about to be dismissed empty-handed. He rallied his courage. He would have risked his liberty, his very life, sooner than be balked of this chance of competence.

'Perhaps you would prefer to give your message to the butler,' Aurelia said, and her fingers closed upon the embossed handle of the bell, but her eyes never for a moment wandered from the weather-beaten face of Game Dick. She did not know his purpose, but she suspected it, and to suspect was enough to call all her resources into play. She, who did nothing idly, knew well that her best chance of taming the evil spirits that she had evoked, was to maintain an aspect of fearless indifference; but even she felt a momentary thrill of fear when Game Dick spoke his mind thus: 'They told me, miss, I should find you a plucky one, and I expected so to do; but if you were twice as bold and twice as cool—and I never saw any one take it as you do—we can tell you what you don't guess at. You think the secret' (the man's wily eyes saw Aurelia shrink slightly, and glance towards the door, so he repeated the word) 'you think the secret's down among the mud and weeds of the river, never to come up in our time. That's a mistake. The secret's in safe-keeping, it is. We've got, in old Nanny's cellar, where many a good keg of something stronger than water has been stowed away in years past—we've got something worth the keeping, something for which seven hundred pounds are bid by government, and my Lord Lynn'—

Aurelia's eyes never flinched or faltered, loud and threatening as the man's voice grew. She looked at him as a keeper might look at a wild beast that it was needful to keep in subjection; but she could not prevent her lips from getting quite dry and bloodless as she put the question: 'Alive?'

'Alive! What good, else, would he be?' answered Dick, with coarse triumph. Aurelia, never once withdrawing her gaze from the ruffian's face, reflected for a few moments, and then said, in the low, sweet voice, that seemed to grow more and more gentle as danger and excitement gathered thicker around: 'Of course, I know your business here; but I know more than that. Seven hundred pounds is a great sum of money, and if you dared to ask for it in a court of criminal justice, you would not be here to-day to bargain with me. You do not dare to claim the reward, and you know it!'

It was Game Dick's turn to wince before that tone of resolute conviction, before those cold, dauntless eyes, before that pitiless directness of speech, so unlike any that he had heard before since he was an urchin thief of seven, and stole sixpenny wares from stall and shop-door; but he instantly began to bluster: 'You'd better speak us fair, my fine madam, I can tell you, and'—

Aurelia lifted up the bell, and rang it sharply. There was ineffable scorn in her voice, scorn that even penetrated Dick's callous soul, as she made

answer: 'Silence, sir! No one has ever spoken to me in this manner, nor will I suffer any one to do so. You think you have me at your mercy, no doubt. Try your power; but remember, that at the first move you make, you shall be indicted for a conspiracy to extort money by threats. You best know how it will fare with you in prison and in court, and whether it would not have been wiser on your part to let bygones be bygones. The lawyers and the police can find something worth notice in your past lives, I dare say.'

These words were said very rapidly but smoothly, and with an expression of quiet, resolute malignity, that altered the expression of Aurelia's face completely; and Game Dick, after a hasty mental calculation of chances, wiped his damp brow with the back of his hairy hand, and made his sullen apology: 'Beg pardon, miss. I'll not speak a word of this sort again, on my oath. No offence, I hope.' And then Thomas, the footman, who had not been very far off, came in answer to the jingle of the hand-bell.

'Thomas,' said Aurelia quietly, 'ask the house-keeper to order some refreshments for this—for Mr Brown, who will be returning to Warwick almost immediately. I will ring again.' Thomas bowed and withdrew. Aurelia went on unruffled: 'You require a large sum, I suppose, to arrange matters on a pleasant footing. So long as you are civil and obliging, I have not the slightest objection to your profiting by what chance has given you; but I shall not pay beforehand, or the temptation to betray my trust might be too great. You are aware, I dare say, that I am about to be married—and to whom? Very good. When I am Lady Lynn, and when the person you allude to is removed to a place where he can be properly cared for, I will pay you a sum equal to the reward offered.'

Dick shook his cropped head—'Not enough!'

'Then I add a hundred. Eight hundred pounds is what I offer, nor will I give more. I shall be of age before the day fixed for my wedding, and can draw out so large a sum without exciting remark. That, now, would be impossible; but I will pay fifty pounds in gold on Tuesday next to your friend Mrs Brown. I am going over to Blanchminster on that day, and will hand the money to her when the carriage stops at the turnpike. For the rest, you must be content to wait two months, or perhaps three, till my arrangements can be made. Stay,' and she lifted her hand with a slight gesture of warning, which was not lost on the shrewd fellow before her—'stay, I know perfectly well what you wish to say, but it is wiser not to say it. You cannot frighten me—you cannot do me a real injury. What do you know of me? I ask. Nothing but this, that I have taken a pitying interest in an unfortunate person, whose relatives I once knew, and whom I desire to be properly taken care of, and to keep out of harm's way, and from the disgrace of a public exposure of his afflicted state. That is all. And remember, I alone saw the man who fired the pistol—I alone could furnish evidence to convict him; and if he be found "Not guilty," what becomes of your reward? Go against me, and your reward will be a prison. Serve me faithfully, and I may probably not limit my recompense to the amount I spoke of just now. Are you satisfied?'

Game Dick was checkmated for once. His quick

wit enabled him, point by point, to drink in this merciless logic, so cold and clear, so emphasised by the steady look of those fathomless gray eyes, that he could no more read than if they had been those of a sphynx. He made his bow, looked down at the carpet, and uttered a grisly imprecation on his own head if he should do anything in the matter without 'her ladyship's leave.'

'Then that is all that need be said,' Aurelia remarked, as she glided to the fireplace, and rang the bell, not the hand-bell this time, but the one in ordinary use. Thomas did not answer the summons; it was Jenkins, the butler, whose gray head and round-shouldered figure appeared, and to the hospitable care of Jenkins the supposed emissary of the police was consigned. Game Dick shuffled off under the butler's charge, Aurelia smiling calmly as she made the faintest possible inclination of her proud head in answer to his duck and growl of farewell; but it was noteworthy that never once, while gliding towards the chimney-piece to ring for the servant, or afterwards, did she cease to look at Game Dick in the same steady manner. When, however, the door closed on the two men, a great shadow seemed to fall on Aurelia's fair face, and to darken its beauty. She looked sadly weary and worn as she turned to the window, and she sighed, not heavily, but with a short impatient sigh, as if her heart were at war with herself and all the world.'

'The old Goody Two Shoes' traditions of the nursery are right, after all,' she murmured, gazing out at the faded flower-garden and its withered pomp of the dead summer. 'One false step, and no more truth, no more honour, no more peace—nothing but cobwebs of lies, and I, the spinner, fearing day by day to see the meshes break and leave me bare and forsaken of all. I wish I could repent; I wish — but it is too late now. I must dree my weird, as the Scotch say, and follow the crooked path I chose for myself. So be it!'

### WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS AND MODEL LODGING-HOUSES.

'NORTH London Railway. Eighth Clearance Sale. Materials of about one hundred and eighty Houses near the Kingsland Road.'—'Midland Railway. Building materials of one hundred and thirty-eight Houses in Agar Town.' Such announcements as these, repeated with great frequency during the last two or three years, are of serious import to working-men. A wealthy shopkeeper or manufacturer can generally manage to fight his own battle with the railway companies; if they will insist on obtaining his premises, he can enforce an adequate return, or at least secure himself against any considerable loss. With a working-man, however, the case is different. Whether he occupies a very small house, or lodgings in one of larger size, he is turned out with little ceremony by railway companies, and is driven to seek a home elsewhere. The companies do not build other blocks of workmen's dwellings, nor are there many spots in London where such can be built. What is the consequence? The unhoused workpeople throng to the still existing lodging-houses,

and cram them to a degree fatal to health, comfort, and decency; paying, moreover, a higher rental than has hitherto been charged for lodgings in London. The South-eastern Railway extension from London Bridge to Charing Cross; the Chatham and Dover extension from the Elephant and Castle to Ludgate Hill; the Brighton Company's widening from New Cross to London Bridge; the Blackwall extension to the Docks; the North London extension from Kingsland to Finsbury; the same company's widening from Camden Town to Kingsland; the Midland Company's extension to London at Somers Town; the Metropolitan extension from Farringdon Street to Finsbury—have led to the destruction of many thousands of workmen's houses, or houses in which workmen were wont to dwell. And now, what do we see in this inflated spasmodic joint-stock year 1864? The metropolis is threatened with schemes which would cut it up in all directions, and destroy houses to an extent far exceeding anything of which we have hitherto had experience. Fortunately, some of the new railway projects failed on Standing Orders; some have been withdrawn; some have been rejected by a joint committee of the Lords and Commons; and some have been discountenanced by special committees. Still, there will be many of them carried safely through these ordeals; and we shall have to look forward to the destruction of many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of additional lodging-houses during the next few years.

It therefore becomes a matter of interest to inquire what degree of success has attended the establishment of *Model Lodging-houses*—large blocks of buildings planned with due regard to sanitary considerations. If they really succeed, it will be an important result; for, being mostly lofty, they will make one acre go as far as two or three acres covered with small houses. The Society of Arts lately deputed to one of the members of the Council (Mr Twining, who has laboured heartily and generously in this matter) the duty of collecting as much information as possible concerning the present condition of these groups of workmen's dwellings in the metropolis. The facts ascertained are to be made the basis whereon further extensions and modifications are to be recommended. The great problem is—*how to make the buildings pay*. Benevolence may begin the system, but Commerce must carry it on; and Commerce will do so conditionally only on a fair interest for capital being obtainable. Well-filled lodging-houses of the usual kind, in poor and thickly-inhabited neighbourhoods, are very profitable; and it is now believed that well-built lodging-houses on the new plan will pay sufficiently well to lead to the investment of capital in this direction.

The Model Lodging-house System in London has had seventeen years of growth. In 1847, the 'Labourers' Friend Society' finished and opened a group of buildings in George Street, Bloomsbury, in the midst of what was one of the 'slums' of St Giles's, but which has been greatly improved by the formation of New Oxford Street. The building is intended as lodgings for one hundred and four unmarried men. It has a dismal exterior, certainly, but then it is in a dismal narrow street, and the

Society directed its attention mainly to the interior. The sort of persons for whom this group of buildings was intended was indicated in a speech by the Earl of Shaftesbury (at that time Lord Ashley): 'A labouring-man comes to a town where employment is to be had, when he is in the prime of life, from twenty-five to thirty-five, and capable of making fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five shillings per week. It is necessary he should take a lodging near the place where his work is carried on. The tenements he has to choose from are many of them in ill-drained, ill-ventilated neighbourhoods, of filthy description. From these, however, he is compelled to make a selection. What is the consequence? The consequence, as appears from the testimony of city missionaries and ministers of all denominations, is, that of hundreds and hundreds of these men who come in the prime of life to a town in search of employment, it is found ere long that their health is broken down—that they come on the parish—that they sink into the grave.' To avert some of these calamities was the purpose of the Model Lodging-house in George Street. The building is five stories in height; having a stone staircase up the middle, from which passages to the various rooms branch out to the right and left. The basement story contains a kitchen with range and boiler, a crockery-room, a washing-house, a drying-closet, a bath-room, a safe-room, and a ventilating draft for supplying warm or cold air to the whole building. The safe-room is a large brick apartment, containing as many safes as there are lodgers, one to each; each safe has two shelves, a perforated zinc door, and a lock with a key different from all the other keys in the house. On the ground-floor are the general eating-room and sitting-room, together with the superintendent's quarters. Up stairs are the dormitories—large rooms partitioned off into bed-places, each having a bed, bedding, box, chair, and door with lock and key. All this accommodation for cooking, sleeping, and general living is supplied at fourpence per night. The same Society ('Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring-classes') about the same time constructed other model lodging-houses on a different plan in Bagnigge Wells Road—forming a street of two sides, open at one end. The group consists of several houses of two stories only in height; some planned with thirty single rooms for as many females, some with two rooms for families, and some for three rooms. The tenements of two or three rooms contain all the conveniences that a family would need, and have a sort of outer-door or lobby-door, to insure privacy from adjacent tenements. The Model Building in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury, was founded by the same Society, to carry out more fully the plan of accommodating married workmen with their families; the tenements, whether of two or three rooms each, and whether on the ground-floor or the upper stories, are expressly arranged on this principle of 'Every Englishman's house is his castle.' After the departure of the cholera in 1849, a 'Thanksgiving Fund' was collected; and, at the suggestion of the late Bishop of London, some of this money was appropriated by the Labourers' Friend Society to the purchase of a freehold site in Portpool Lane, Gray's Inn Lane. On this site was built a lodging-house comprising twenty tenements for poor families, apartments for one hundred and twenty-

eight single women, a public wash-house, and a cellar beneath for hucksters' goods. The single females live two in a room, and pay one shilling a week each. This group is known as the 'Thanksgiving Buildings.' Besides these wholly new structures, the Labourers' Friend Society, between 1847 and 1857, altered and remodelled many old houses in poor neighbourhoods, in order to adapt them as improved lodging-houses for artisans and labouring-men—such as the Hatton Garden Chambers for fifty-four single men; Charles Street, Drury Lane, for eighty-two single men; Wild Court, Drury Lane, comprising one hundred and six rooms; Clerk's Buildings, St Giles's, for eighty families; Tyndall's Buildings, Gray's Inn Lane, for eighty-eight families and forty single men; and one or two others.

Meanwhile, another body of persons formed themselves into a 'Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Working-classes,' avowedly for the purpose—not of aiding the necessitous poor—but of ascertaining whether comfortable apartments for workmen and their families, let at reasonable rentals, would yield an adequate return for capital. At first, the state of the law in respect to unlimited liability interfered with the formation of the Association; but a charter granted by the crown removed this difficulty. A kind of joint-stock company was sanctioned by the charter, empowered to raise a certain amount of capital, on which interest not exceeding five per cent. might be realised. The 'Metropolitan Buildings,' the first fruit of this new plan, were opened in December 1847, in Old St Pancras Road. The group consists of a centre and two wings, having five tiers of windows on every side, belonging to five 'flats' or floors. There are, in fact, eight large houses to form the group, each house having its own outer-door, staircase, inner-doors, and sets of chambers. The rooms, four hundred and twenty in number, are parted off, some into tenements or sets of two rooms, but mostly into three rooms. Each tenement of three rooms comprises sitting-room, two bedrooms, scullery, water-closet, sink, meat-safe, and dust-bin—all enclosed from the other inmates of the houses. The tariff of rent established does not vary far from an average of two shillings per room per week—lower than some of the dirty dens in Westminster and Drury Lane. Another venture by the same Association was that of the Metropolitan Buildings in Albert Street, Mile End New Town, opened in 1850. The group is smaller than that in the Pancras Road, comprising two hundred and thirty-four rooms; but the arrangements as to ventilation, water-supply, drainage, privacy of families, &c., are similar. The locality is only a little eastward of a desperately poor district of Spitalfields, in the Brick Lane region, where there was an urgent need of some improvement in these matters. The Albert Cottages in the same street for thirty-three families, and the Metropolitan Chambers, also in Albert Street, for two hundred and thirty-four single men, seem to denote that this new kind of accommodation has been appreciated. The Ingestre Buildings in New Street, Golden Square, with two hundred and twenty-four rooms; two renovated houses, with forty rooms, in Bartholomew Close; the Model Building in Nelson Square, Bermondsey, with four hundred and eight rooms; and the Soho Chambers in Compton Street, for one hundred and twenty-eight



single men—all are component parts of the Metropolitan Association's property.

A third body, called the 'Marylebone Association,' has been working to the same end in the parish which its name denotes. It has opened the Christchurch Buildings, in Little James Street, Lisson Grove, for thirty-one families; the Stafford Buildings, in Stafford Street, for nineteen families; the Lisson Buildings, in Lisson Grove North, for twenty-eight families; and Gray's Buildings, in Duke Street, Manchester Square, for no less than one hundred and fifty-nine families. Other companies and individuals have established improved lodging-houses near Shadwell Railway Station, for one hundred and twelve families; in Grosvenor Mews, Hanover Square, for thirty-two families; at the Albion Chambers, Dean Street, Soho, for forty-five single men; at the Dormitory, Dudley Street, St Giles's, for twenty-four girls; and elsewhere. Alderman Waterlow has lately constructed a lofty block of dwelling-houses in Paul Street, Finsbury, neat and cheerful on the exterior, and well planned inside. There are balconies to each floor; and the rooms are grouped into tenements of two, three, and four each, to suit families of different grades. The result of this experiment will be looked forward to with much interest; for Alderman Waterlow, so far from regarding the matter *ad misericordiam*, calculated that the houses would probably yield from six to eight per cent. for the capital spent in constructing them, even when let at rents lower than those paid by industrious families for worse rooms in worse houses in the immediate neighbourhood. So rapidly did the rooms let when finished, that a company was at once formed to erect similar buildings at King's Cross and elsewhere—openly and avowedly on the commercial principle of 'making the thing pay;' and we shall hear something of these additional buildings ere long. They will not be suited, however, for the *very* poor, seeing that the minimum rent for two rooms is to be five shillings per week—suitable for an artisan, but certainly not for what we are in the habit of regarding as a labouring-man; the three-roomed tenements being from six to seven shillings. Alderman Waterlow pulled down many wretched small houses to make way for his modern group; but whether the inmates of the former have taken up the new quarters, or have gone to swell the number of lodgers in overcrowded courts and alleys, is a question worth asking and answering.

In some respects, the most remarkable of the Model Lodging-houses in the metropolis are those which have been due to the liberality of Miss Burdett Coutts and Mr Peabody. The munificence of the lady here named is well known to all who have interested themselves in the welfare of the people, especially in crowded localities. In a district about half a mile north-east of Shoreditch Church is Columbia Square, a name given by Miss Burdett Coutts to the handsomest cluster of workmen's dwellings hitherto erected in the metropolis. Four clusters or blocks of building enclose the four sides of an open quadrangle, and have two frontages, one towards the quadrangle, and one towards the roads outside. For distinction, the four blocks are known respectively as Columbia Square East, West, North, and South. Each block is of great length, five stories high, and fitted with baths, wash-houses, club-rooms, and numerous appliances conducive to health, cleanliness, and

comfort. There are 390 rooms for 183 families. In the centre of the quadrangle is an elegant cross or architectural tower, bearing a few inscriptions; and northward of the cluster, separated from it only by a pleasant raised terrace, is a commodious new church, with school and parsonage. The rents average about two shillings per room (a standard very extensively adopted in such buildings), and the tenements are eagerly sought for. Still more recently, another cluster has been built, somewhat southward of the last, and in the thickly-populated district of Spitalfields. The reader will remember that Mr Peabody, an American merchant who had made a large fortune in England, some time ago made over the noble sum of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling to trustees, to be applied as they might think best for the benefit of the poor of London. As the gift was a very unusual one (the donor being still alive), so is the duty of the trustees a delicate one; for they have to choose between many conflicting modes of benefiting the poor of so great a metropolis, and are inundated with applications from committees and secretaries of institutions. The trustees determined that one of their first enterprises should be the erection of a group of lodging-houses, to assist in putting to the test of experience the problem of making such places self-paying. A site was purchased, at the junction of White Lion Street with Commercial Street, Spitalfields; and on this site a handsome structure has lately been opened. The building has two main fronts, of 215 feet and 140 feet respectively, domestic Gothic in their architecture, and decidedly an ornament in a neighbourhood where handsome buildings are rare. A peculiarity in this structure is, that the basement, ground-floor, and first floor, are built as shops, store-rooms, and dwelling-rooms for the shopkeepers; irrespective of the tenements (of two or three rooms each) on the second and third floors, well furnished with cupboards, cooking-ranges, boilers, ovens, lavatories, baths, &c.

There are many knotty questions waiting to be answered in connection with this model-lodging movement, and some of them cannot just yet be answered. Do the new buildings yield an adequate return for capital, at rentals low enough to meet the resources of working-men and families of small income? Do the men themselves endure the restraints insisted upon in these places, in reference to hours of closing, the use of keys, &c.? Will the owners of existing lodging-houses be impelled by the spirit of competition to improve their dwellings, as a means of retaining their former hold on their lodgers? Will these model buildings ever reach down to the level of the *very* poor, that class whose miseries are so often brought under public notice? Is there not a tendency in such persons to burrow out of the way when at home, in courts and alleys, as if in dismay at the spruce regularity of the large new structures? Or, if reckless and impoverished, would not such persons fear that charity, in its popular form of almsgiving, might be checked unless the recipients appear to be in squalid misery? In all probability, the Society of Arts will be in a position by degrees to solve many of these problems. The avowed purpose of the Society in authorising the investigations which Mr Twining undertook was, 'To prepare a secure basis for further undertakings of this kind, and thereby

to induce large investments of capital in this direction.' Circulars were sent to the committees or proprietors of all the existing establishments, and a system organised whereby useful information of various kinds can be tabulated for future application. A plan has been adopted at Leeds, of which Mr Hole, in a letter written to Mr Twining, says: 'We are not only making improved dwellings, but are enabling working-men to become the owners on very easy terms. By finding a fifth of the cost of the house, and paying the same rent he has been accustomed to pay for an inferior dwelling, a working-man may become his own landlord in thirteen years.'

A committee, appointed by the Society of Arts to digest the information obtained by Mr Twining, will have a formidable work to do, if it accomplishes all that it undertakes. But it will be a work of great value, even if only in part completed. The probable causes of success in some instances, and of failure in others; the extent to which the landlord ought to supply such accessories as water-supply, laundry, drying-ground, baths, store-rooms, and hoists; the introduction of such new building materials and contrivances as will lessen the outlay for repairs, rates, and insurance, or will render the buildings more durable, fire-proof, or healthy; the estimated return for capital in the old lodging-houses in crowded neighbourhoods; the probable average return in large buildings constructed on the modern system; the probable advantages of appropriating the ground-floor of such buildings to shops; the statistics of disease and mortality in the various new buildings, as aids towards an estimate of their healthiness; any expedients as to wall-surface, flooring, furniture, &c., which may have been found conducive to a healthy condition of the dwellings; the advantage and drawbacks of the external gallery or balcony system, adopted in some of the buildings; the availability of terrace-roofs for drying-grounds; the expediency, or otherwise, of combining with the model lodging-house system the necessary arrangements for co-operative stores, reading-rooms, penny savings-banks, or other establishments, suitable for what the French would call *cités ouvrières*; the balance of advantages in building new structures and in remodelling old ones; the possibility of establishing such remodelled houses in the dense working districts; the chances offered by the new railway schemes for building workmen's dwellings at the outskirts of the metropolis; the best mode of obviating certain difficulties which have arisen concerning the sub-letting of family-rooms; the comparative merits of quarterly and weekly tenancies; the best means of enforcing punctual payments as a rule, without precluding leniency as an exception; the difficulties of rent-collecting, which have in some instances led to the intrusting of this duty to a contracting agent; whether these new undertakings would best be fostered by limited liability companies, co-operative building societies, or an improved system of mortgage; whether rentals might be so regulated, that after a certain number of years a working-man might become owner of the cottage which he inhabits—all these are questions which await solution, on the basis of information recently obtained; and it will at once be seen how comprehensive is their relationship to the well-being of working-men, and to the future mapping out of our metropolis.

# 'THEY'RE DEAR FISH TO ME'

## A TRUE INCIDENT.

THE farmer's wife sat at the door,  
A pleasant sight to see,  
And blithesome were the wee, wee bairns  
That played around her knee.

When bending 'neath her heavy creel,  
A poor fishwife came by,  
And turning from the toilsome road,  
Unto the door drew nigh.

She laid her burden on the green,  
And spread its scaly store,  
With trembling hands, and pleading words,  
She told them o'er and o'er.

But lightly laughed the young guidwife,  
'We're no sae scarce o' cheer;  
Tak' up your creel, and gang your ways—  
I'll buy nae fish sae dear.'

Bending beneath her load again,  
A weary sight to see;  
Right sorely sighed the poor fishwife:  
'They're dear fish to me!'

'Our boat was oot ae fearfu' night,  
And when the storm blew o'er,  
My husband, and my three brave sons,  
Lay corpses on the shore.

'I've been a wife for thirty years,  
A childless widow three.  
I maun buy them now, to sell again—  
They're dear fish to me!'

The farmer's wife turned to the door—  
What was't upon her cheek!  
What was there rising in her breast,  
That then she scarce could speak!

She thought upon her ain guidman,  
Her lightsome laddies three;  
The woman's words had pierced her heart—  
'They're dear fish to me!'

'Come back,' she cried, with quavering voice,  
And pity's gathering tear;  
'Come in, come in, my poor woman,  
Ye're kindly welcome here.

'I kentna o' your aching heart,  
Your weary lot to dree;  
I'll ne'er forget your sad, sad words:  
"They're dear fish to me!"'

Ay, let the happy-hearted learn  
To pause ere they deny  
The meed of honest toil, and think  
How much their gold may buy—

How much of manhood's wasted strength,  
What woman's misery—  
What breaking hearts might swell the cry:  
'They're dear fish to me!'

All communications to be addressed to 'The Editors of *Chambers's Journal*, 47 Paternoster Row, London,' accompanied by postage-stamps, as the return of rejected contributions cannot otherwise be guaranteed. Communications should also, in every case, be accompanied by the writer's *Christian and surname in full*.

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